

# Ep #180: Understanding the Energy of Resistance (Part 1)



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

## Ep #180: Understanding the Energy of Resistance (Part 1)

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine Expert, and life coach, Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome my love, let's get started.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. Leo season is soon upon us. I felt compelled to say that because I am very much a Leo, as you've heard me say 4,000 times; as a Leo is wont to say 4,000 times. I just love Leo season. I was making the music... I do breath work with the folks in Anchored every month, and with the alumni. I make these playlists that are a pride and joy for me; it's so much fun. I was making a very raucous and exciting one for Leo season, for August because, duh, right? It's what the season calls for.

I'm so excited that I'm having some of my nearest and dearest over for my birthday soon. And then, my partner and I are going camping up in Ithaca, New York, which is going to be so beautiful. I've never been there, and I'm excited. I'm excited. So, I love to bring the things that come up in Anchored to the podcast, because they're the things that are up for all of you who are listening, right?

Recently, we were talking about a term that has become quite the buzzword these days, which is "resistance." It was many moons ago, when I was doing my breathwork facilitator training, that I first encountered that term. If someone couldn't drop into the meditation, someone couldn't get present and stay with the breath work, they were told they were having resistance. Or, a lot more yikes, being resistant, and that they just had to work harder to drop in. They had to overcome it. They had to push through.

The folks in Anchored bring this up all the time, when we're working with our inner children, our protector parts, or are doing somatic or body-based

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practices. Early on in our time together this kind of language doesn't last long, don't worry. I hear them say things like; I'm feeling stuck. I have resistance to going there, but I can force myself to go there.

They say it with this energy, and of course I'm never judging, we've been taught to think this way, right? So, this energy that says that resistance is something to beat. A problem to muscle through and get to the other side of with the brute force of will. I find that whole framework, for looking at and working with resistance, to be problematic to say the least, from a nervous system standpoint.

I think it's just not loving, compassionate, curious, or kind to treat that energy within us like it's a problem. Because it's not. I think of resistance as the voice of self-love, letting you know that, in this moment, you are not currently resourced enough in your nervous system; which we talked about in Episodes 135 and 174. Being resourced in your nervous system; meaning that you can support your nervous system with love and care to come back to the calm, centered, safe social place that is ventral vagal from sympathetic activation, which is the adrenaline fight-or-flight freakout stage, or dorsal, which is the checked-out disconnected state.

So yeah, our resistance is that voice inside that says, "Babe. My love, you are not currently resourced enough, connected with your resources enough, to look at or work with the issue at hand. So today, I will pause it." But that feeling of resistance is a kind, caring energy within you that alerts you to what your body perceives as dangerous. And, that's a gift.

It's a gift to know and learn what your body thinks is dangerous, so that you can work with it in a different way. It's a little internal red flag that says, "My darling, tender ravioli that is me, it's best not to go to there alone and in the dark."

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So, my darling. Of course, of course, of course, of course your body is offering you the gift of resistance when you're attempting to go to a place or to look at a part of your psyche that's been hidden away from you, for very good inner child or nervous system reasons. Of course, your body is resisting starting that new movement practice, or way of eating, or way of calendaring, or whatever other behavior, that a part of you is linking with certain doom.

Because your amygdala, the old fear center in the limbic system, which we talked about in Episode 153, Inner Child Science, is getting activated by that thing. And, it's getting activated by the thing and is sounding all of the alarm bells in your body that say, "Do not go to there," because that's its job. It's one and only job is to resist, or to block things that might make you die.

And granted, its understanding of what might make you die, is quite different from what your adult brain, what your super smart cognitive capacity is telling you. But that's so not the point. Your sweet little amygdala thinks listening is scary.

That is why a shift in how we talk about and think about resistance, is what is called for. My little tiger tail, does it feel kind to you to try to push, shove, or beat that energy, which seeks only to protect you? My beloved tenderoni, I think not. And, if you've ever tried to push through when your body says 'no,' how has that worked out for you?

I must say, it never worked out well for me, because I would either just get all up in my head during meditation, breathwork, somatics, or a challenging conversation. Beating myself up for not being able to go to a place my body doesn't want me to go to. And, mostly I would beat myself up because I

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didn't realize that's what was happening. I bought it hook, line and sinker that I was being resistant. So of course, I'd beat me up.

Just the other day in Anchored, someone said, "I get so frustrated when resistance shows up, because I just want to do the work already. I want to get better. And, I'm mad that it gets in my way." Now, I get that. I hear that; that's understandable. But pushing away our body signals, symptoms, messages, just because we don't like them or don't want them to be happening, also doesn't tend to work out very well for us.

Again, it never worked out too well for me and my once, seemingly endless, irritable bowel syndrome journey. I would negate my symptoms, try to just like ignore them into not being there, and that never do me any kind of good.

The other thing that happens when we try to push through resistance, is that we collapse towards dorsal, which is the freeze or disconnection part of the nervous system, and we go blank. Because we're supposed to, because science.

This used to happen to me, to me, for me really, in challenging conversations with an old partner who often triggered or activated my nervous system with things like a loud voice or yelling. I would feel super activated, I would go blank. And then, I would try to push through in these talks and would lose all connection with myself. I would lose my words, which if you know me, is a surprising thing indeed. Because this little Argentine Leo is a serious chatterbox.

The pushing energy I had with myself to try to please my then partner, would lead me into a blanked out, shut-down kind of place that felt truly terrible. I don't recommend it. What about when you're resisting doing

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the thing that you know is best for you? Well, I would offer that perhaps subconsciously, it's scary.

Perhaps, just because it's new. Perhaps, because you don't know who you'll be on the other side of it. Perhaps, because you're scared of failure from a perfectionist mindset. Or perhaps, because someone else might not like it, might be upset by it, might not agree, might be displeased.

All those people pleasing, codependent thoughts were such a part of my internal landscape for so long. And for not a moment, did they serve me in the long run. Though it sure did keep me feeling falsely safe for a hot minute, while simultaneously keeping me feeling stuck and trapped. Like I was doomed to stay in relationships, friendships, jobs, apartments that felt bad, that didn't serve me.

Because my habitual mindset was one in which discomfort was comfortable. And, because I didn't know how to meet that resistance with anything other than being annoyed and grumped at, and buy it; and I sure did stick around. And, therein lies the problem.

When we get mad at this internal resistance, when we think it's a problem, we get mad at ourselves. Because often, well, we don't think of the resistance as a part of us. It's almost like it's this disembodied energy within us. And, because we forget that resistance was once a brilliant and amazing survival skill, which we talked about, oh 1,000 years ago in Episode 19 on adaptive and maladaptive behaviors.

In that grumbling state, we don't even realize it, but we unwittingly take ourselves out of what is most needed in these moments, the most vital remedy of all, being present in our lives, in our bodies. And instead, we get all up in our heads. Thinking about the resistance we're experiencing,

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making plans, applying our smarts to what is truly a somatic or bodily experience. And we thus try to mind muscle our way through instead of being with it, which is what that resistance most needs.

Finally, there's another kind of resistance that we all love to roll around and from our codependent thought habits. And there's so much more to this, so I'll explore it in depth in another episode. But for today, I want to say that it's super common for us to resist reality, often from our perfectionism. And this too, has less than optimal outcomes for us.

I was recently coaching a member of the Anchored familia on her chronic migraines. She shared that when she feels one coming on, she immediately goes to annoyance, frustration, anger, that she's getting a headache in the first place. Which quickly turns into anger at herself, her body, her headache, her health-care providers. When the action she's taking, in the think-feel-act cycle, is to resist that she's having the migraine, then she doesn't do anything about it. Until it's bad.

And, this happens for all of us. We resist reality. We resist the facts of the matter. We resist accepting what's true in our relationships, friendships, at work, for this fantasy story that it will eventually get better if we just work harder, or push ourselves more, or do more, or fix other people's lives more. And so, we end up resisting making change in our own lives, due in part, to resisting what's real, just because we don't like it.

I got to just say, like, if only that worked to fix our problems. But alas, herein, what you resist, persists, indeed. So, my loves, it's your favorite time of the show. Remedy time. I don't know why that made me giggle. God, I just love to giggle. It just feels so good in my entire body.



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So today, I'm going to be offering five steps to lovingly support ourselves in the presence of resistance. So that it can start to begin to feel... Did you see how much space I gave you there to be in process? It can start to begin to feel like a supportive gift, and not something to be pissed off at, at all. Doesn't that sound lovely?

I think it's really lovely indeed, because resistance is not a promise; it's a gift. And, I will pinky promise on that. So, let's get to the remedies. I'll describe each generally. And then, I'll talk all about the more specific how-tos next week. I'm doing that because I love you and I love your nervous system, and giving you all of this plus like step-by-step, 'do this; do that,' 'do this...' it's too much. It's too much for one nervous system, so we're not going to do it.

Alright, so, step one, resource your nervous system. We talked about this in Episodes 135, 172, and 174. My program is called Anchoring because connecting in with our nervous system allows us to Anchor ourselves to the shore, so we can go swimming out into the dark and stormy waters knowing we are tethered to safety.

In Anchored, we Anchor ourselves in our own hearts, in our own sense of self. We have our own backs, and we Anchor ourselves in ventral vagal. So please, my tender, tender, tender little buttercup, please do not start to engage with resistance, until you take a moment to truly Anchor yourself in a nervous system resource.

We do this *before* we step into awareness around our felt sensation, before we start doing exercises like body scans, and exploring our bodies to support ourselves, and getting in contact with resistance. And while I'm on the subject of body scans, if you head over to [VictoriaAlbina.com](http://VictoriaAlbina.com). right at the top of the page there's a teal bar, click it, it says 'free meditations.' That



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will take you to a place where you can put your name and email in, and you can get a set of free body scans from Wah! for free. Because, I love you.

Okay. so step one, connect in with those nervous system resources. Get really Anchored there. Step two, in shocking news to longtime listeners, next, we will lovingly witness ourselves and our resistant parts, bringing our awareness to the part of us that says, "Absolutely not. Thou shalt not do, the thing you said you want to do, because I, almighty resistance, forbid it."

In so doing, we raise our awareness of our bodily or felt connection with our inner resistance. Your job is just to get present to it. That's all. Where does it live? What's going on there? Get present. Step three, then we remind ourselves that, at first, we are not trying to shift the story, or the thought in our minds and bodies. That's right, I'm saying step away from that T-line, my thought workers, step away.

Because first, we need to shift our relationship to the resistance, by deciding that we are here not to change or beat the resistance. We are here to befriend it; to make nice, to be pals, to honor it, to speak to it kindly. And in so doing, to show it the respect it most truly deserves. Because it is, after all, your co-conspirator and keeping your inner children safe.

When we meet resistance with more resistance, then we find ourselves befuddled that it sticks around. But of course, it does. Which again, brings to mind that old adage, "What you resist, persists." So, we stop resisting resistance, and start to befriend it.

I'll expand this, sort of zoom out to say, whatever you're applying thought work to, whatever your thought working on, I don't ever advise trying to change a thought when you're hating that thought, or are annoyed by it.

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Because your nervous system will say 'no,' and it will often say it quite loudly, in order to get your attention.

When you speak to yourself with a grumped feeling, you get a grumped feeling or collapse back. You don't move yourself into that ventral vagal nervous system state, where you feel safe and connected. And being there, being Anchored in ventral vagal is important to be able to meet resistance lovingly.

When we unwittingly deny, negate, or turn away from that resistant voice... When we tell it; you are not wanted, you're a bad part, you're not loved, my darling, we tell that part that it just doesn't belong. And, I don't ever want to do that to any part of myself.

Around here in Anchored, we meet all of our parts, even the parts we don't love, with love and care. Because as long as they feel othered, smothered and shunned, exiled from your consciousness, they will get louder and more intense. Like a little kid pulling on your pants saying, "Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me," they are just going to get louder until they get your attention.

And in so doing, they will continue to take you out of your bodily experience and into their cozy place, which is the mind. And so, you'll continue to live your life and these important moments from the neck up, instead of meeting them with embodiment and presence. Which for me, is the goal of all this healing work. That, and more giggling. Joking, but I'm not at all joking. Like, what else are we healing for, if not more love, and joy, and fun, and pleasure, and giggles. But I digress. But what's new?

So, meet the thought with love. Meet the energy with love. Don't try to change it, until you've changed your relationship to it. Step four, remember

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that this voice or energy is just a part of you. It's not the whole of you. Right? And so pay attention to your language. We say things like, I am resisting. And in that, instead of remembering that we're all just temporarily experience resistance from a part of ourselves.

We make it mean that all of us, like the whole of who you are, is full up with resistance. But that couldn't possibly be true. Clearly, not all of you is resisting, or you never would have decided to take on this new habit, this new way of showing up. You never would have walked into that breathwork or somatic session. You would never have chosen to do the thing at all, if all of you was resisting.

So, my darling, there's no need for all-or-nothing, black and white thinking here, which we talked about in Episodes 146 and 147. I will invite you to step into the nuance. Because reminding ourselves that this is just one part of us, allows us to begin to disidentify with it, which is a super vital step. Because as long as you're thinking, "I am resisting," then that's the action you're taking, it becomes all consuming.

When you step out of believing that this is a truth, then you can start to connect with that part of you that does want to do whatever it is you want to do, and can bring that part into your conscious awareness more. Can turn up the proverbial volume on those thoughts, instead of letting the resistance part just run the show unchecked.

The fifth and final step, is to engage your neuroplasticity. And that term means; our brain's capacity to think and believe new thoughts. We just believe our old thoughts because we've heard them time and time and time again. And so, they create a neural groove in our brain, a thought path of least resistance.

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So, we want to shift that pathway. And, we do that by rinsing and repeating. That is to say, we don't change our relationship to our experience of a thought or sensation by working with it once. We engage our brain's amazing plasticity, or ability to think new thoughts and experience new feelings, by coming back to it frequently.

I highly recommend setting a timer on your phone, or having a little alarm pop up on your computer, or whatever, that reminds you to honor your resistance. To perhaps, think of the moment... Let's say this happens all the time in breathwork or when you're doing thought work. You can't think of the new thought, your brain just goes, "I don't know." Right? Or, when you're in conflict, your brain checks-out, whatever it is for you. You could set a little timer once a day, to go through these steps. To think of that moment.

Actually, I would resource first, think of the moment, resource again, right? That's "pendulation;" we talked about that in the episode of taking care of ourselves during tragedy, which was 172. That was a really good one. I loved that episode. Hated the tragedy, loved the episode.

So, resource, think of a situation, resource again, and then walk through these steps. This can take a minute, maybe two. I love to tie new habits to old ones. So, this could be your new toothbrushing habit. I've talked here about pee break meditation before. You know I'm a pint-sized mammal in the height department and I drink an awful lot of water. And, I pee all the time.

I love to link things to peeing. Like, leaving my phone in the other room, I see you with your phone in the bathroom, it's a little gross, let's be real. And instead, while I'm peeing, taking a slow deep breath, and connecting inward. So, maybe while you're peeing, brushing your teeth, putting on your

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socks, whatever it is that you do each and every day, engage your neuroplasticity, and walk through these five steps. I guess you only need to walk through the first four because you're doing the thing.

But really, when you're working with an old neural groove, and something that's somatically quite entrenched, it's not one and done. You got to come back and come back and come back to it. And, that's really the way that we make progress.

Okay, my darlings. This alone, is a huge shift for a lot of us. So, I'm going to pause here for today, as promised, so this can soak in. So, you can start to integrate these conceptual changes, and how we think about and relate to the experience of resistance. Next week, I'll be back to get into the nitty-gritty, step-by-step how-to.

Before we do, what we do, I want to remind you that registration for the Anchored cohort starting 8/8, which is the Lion's Gate in astrology, a most auspicious date, indeed, is coming to a quick close. The group is pretty much almost full.

So, if you love what you're learning on the podcast, and want my coaching and somatic guidance to help you take these lessons, and make them a part of your lived experience. To apply what you're learning here, to change your life for the long haul.

You're not going to want to miss this chance to join us for Anchored; my six-month small, intimate, loving group program. Where we bring in somatics, thought work, breath work, and we combine it all together as a way to step into ever deeper self-love, self-worth and self-care in a real and powerful way. You're not gonna want to miss it, so learn more and apply now at [VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/anchored).

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Alright my beauties, let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart, should you feel so moved. Remember you are safe, you are held, you are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well my beauty. I'll talk to you soon.

If you've been enjoying the show and learning a ton, it's time to apply it with my expert guidance, so you can live life with intention, without the anxiety, overwhelm and resentment, so you can get unstuck. You're not going to want to miss the opportunity to join my exclusive intimate group coaching program. So, head on over to [VictoriaAlbina.com/masterclass](https://VictoriaAlbina.com/masterclass) to grab your seat now. See you there, it's gonna be a good one!